

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 01879 01 OF 02 260503Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARA-10 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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SS-15 ICA-11 EUR-12 HA-05 OMB-01 AID-05 TRSE-00
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R 251325Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8172
INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1879

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, CU, ET
SUBJ: MENGISTU CALLS FOR CUBAN "SUPPORT" IN ERITREA

SUMMARY: IN CONTINUING HEAVY ETHIOPIAN PRESS COVERAGE
OF PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC OR
DIRG) CHAIRMAN LT. COL. MENGISTU HAILE-MARIAM'S VISIT
TO HAVANA, APRIL 25 "ETHIOPIAN HERALD" REPORTED FULL
TEXT OF CASTRO'S AND MENGISTU'S REMARKS ON THE OCCASION
OF THE PLAYA GIRON ORDER BEING CONFERRED ON MENGISTU.
WHILE NOTING VICTORY IN OGADEN, MENGISTU IS REPORTED TO
HAVE SAID THAT ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION STILL HAS LONG AND
HARD STRUGGLE AHEAD BECAUSE "SECESSIONIST GROUPS IN
NORTH, WHICH ARE NOW TOTALLY GUIDED, COORDINATED AND
SUPPORTED BY IMPERIALISTS AND ARAB REACTIONARIES, HAVE
NOT BEEN DEFEATED YET." HE THEN ADDED THAT "I HAVE COM-
PLETE CONFIDENCE THAT THE PEOPLE OF REVOLUTIONARY
CUBA AND THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES OF THE ENTIRE WORLD
WILL BE ON OUR SIDE IN THIS STRUGGLE." BY EQUATING
OGADEN CONFLICT WITH ERITREAN ONE AND CHARACTERIZING
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PAGE 02 ADDIS 01879 01 OF 02 260503Z

LATTER AS " IMPERIALIST AND REACTIONARY ARAB" ATTEMPT
TO UNDERMINE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION, MENGISTU APPEARS
TO BE LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE CUBAN INVOLVEMENT
IN ERITREA, WHETHER IT "RELUCTANT" OR NOT. FAILURE TO
COMPLY COULD PRESENT US WITH A TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY, BUT EMBASSY
CONTINUES TO BELIEVE CUBAN COMBAT TROOPS WILL EVEN-
TUALLY BE USED IN ERITREA AT MENGISTU'S BEHEST. END

SUMMARY.

1. BOTH MENGISTU AND CASTRO USED OPPORTUNITY OF PLAYA GIRON ORDER PRESENTATION TO LAUD ACHIEVEMENTS OF EACH OTHER AND THEIR REVOLUTIONS. CASTRO DREW PARALLEL BETWEEN CUBA AND ETHIOPIA AS TWO COUNTRIES CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH US IN PAST, "CUBA WAS MOST HEAVILY US-DOMINATED COUNTRY IN LATIN AMERICA" AND "FEUDAL ETHIOPIA WAS BEST US ALLY IN AFRICA," BUT WHICH HAD NOW BECOME "BASTIONS OF ANTI-IMPERIALISM AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION." CASTRO SAID, ETHIOPIANS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED "AS COMRADES IN STRUGGLE FOR SAME CAUSE, STANDARD BEARERS OF SINGLE IDEA AND SOLDIERS IN SAME TRENCH." CASTRO DESCRIBED MENGISTU AS A YOUNG OFFICER WITH "CLEAR POLITICAL IDEAS, (HAVING) AN AUDACIOUS AND ENERGETIC CHARACTER, AND THE MOST ADVANCED AND SOLID THINKING (PERSON) IN THE MIDST OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL WHIRLWIND OF THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION." CASTRO CONCLUDED THAT PLAYA GIRON AWARD WAS SYMBOL OF "OUR MODEST CONTRIBUTION TO ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE AND SIGN OF RECOGNITION AND GRATITUDE OF OUR PEOPLE FOR YOUR BRILLIANT CONTRIBUTION TO CAUSE OF REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT AND DEEP FREINDSHIP AND MILITANT SOLIDARITY THAT TODAY EXISTS BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES."

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PAGE 03 ADDIS 01879 01 OF 02 260503Z

2. ON HIS PART, MENGISTU OFFERED EQUAL PRAISE FOR CASTRO AND HIS VICTORY IN APRIL 1961 OVER "FORMER EXPLOITERS, TRAITORS, COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES AND MERCENARIES GATHERED UP AND ORGANIZED BY US GOVT TO INVADE CUBA." NOTING THAT PLAYA GIRON WAS SCENE OF FIRST POLITICAL AND MILITARY DEFEAT OF IMPERIALISTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND ANGOLA WAS EARLIER DESCRIBED BY CASTRO AS AFRICAN GIRON, MENGISTU SAID ETHIOPIA'S VICTORY IN OGADEN, WHERE SOIL WAS COVERED WITH BLOOD OF CUBAN AND ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTIONARIES, SHOULD BE INSCRIBED AS SECOND AFRICAN GIRON. IN REFERRING TO MUTUAL SPILLING OF BLOOD, MENGISTU SAID "THAT SEALS UNITY BETWEEN TWO PEOPLES AND IT WILL BE REMEMBERED ETERNALLY BY OUR PEOPLE."

3. YET, HE CONTINUED, STRUGGLE HAS LONG WAY TO GO BECAUSE SECESSIONIST GROUPS IN NORTH, I.E. ERITREA, HAVE NOT BEEN DEFEATED. MENGISTU CLAIMED "ALL PROPOSALS REPEATEDLY MADE BY ETHIOPIAN MASSES IN QUEST FOR PEACEFUL SOLUTION, WHICH ARE STILL PENDING, HAVE BEEN IGNORED. THUS, ONLY POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE IS TO TAKE UP ARMS WITH ONE HAND, WHILE AT SAME TIME,

OFFER OTHER HAND IN SIGN OF PEACH." HE THEN EX-
PRESSED COMPLETE CONFIDENCE REVOLUTIONARY CUBA AND
OTHER PROGRESSIVES WOULD BE ON ETHIOPIAN SIDE.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE COLLECTIVE.

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 01879 02 OF 02 260508Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1879

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

4. CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM MENGISTU'S REMARKS
ARE THAT (1) PMGSE IS COMMITTED TO INITIAL MILITARY
CAMPAIGN IN ERITREA TO FORCE SECESSIONIST TO NEGO-
TIATE ON PMGSE'S TERMS, (2) PMGSE EXPECTS FULL CUBAN
SUPPORT FOR THIS POLICY, INCLUDING MILITARY IF NECES-
SARY, TO ENSURE ITS SUCCESS, AND (3) BLOOD PACT
SEALED IN OGADEN BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES GREATLY APPRE-
CIATED BY MENGISTU AND ETHIOPIANS AND BASIS FOR FUR-
THER CUBAN MILITARY COMMITMENT IN ERITREA. IT IS
EMBASSY'S BEST CURRENT ESTIMATE THAT ETHIOPIANS WILL
LAUNCH OFFENSIVE IN ERITREA WITHOUT CUBAN COMBAT
TROOPS AND ATTEMPT TO BRING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS WITH
ERITREANS BY OWN PRESSURE ON MILITARY FRONT AND CUBAN/SOVIET/
EAST GERMAN PRESSURE ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS
THAT ETHIOPIANS BY THEMSELVES
WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WIN SUBSTANTIAL ENOUGH VICTORY
AGAINST ERITREANS TO BRING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS AND
THAT MENGISTU WILL REQUEST CUBAN COMBAT TROOP ASSIS-
TANCE IN ERITREA. UNDOUBTEDLY THIS FUTURE REQUEST/
EVENTUALITY IS PART OF CASTRO/MENGISTU'S DESIRE TO ACHIEVE

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 01879 02 OF 02 260508Z

DECISIVE MILITARY VICTORY IN ERITREA USING CUBAN
TROOPS, THIS MAY PRESENT OPENING FOR US TO NURTURE
ETHIOPIAN SUSPICIONS OF SOVIETS AND POSSIBLY TO EN-
COURAGE ETHIOPIA IN DIRECTION OF MORE TRULY NON-
ALIGNED POSITION. BUT FROM ADDIS PERSPECTIVE, IT
APPEARS SOVIETS/CUBANS DO NOT WISH TO ENDANGER THEIR
ALREADY LARGE INVESTMENT HERE AND THUS WILL ACCEDE
TO MENGISTU'S DESIRES.
MATHERON

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